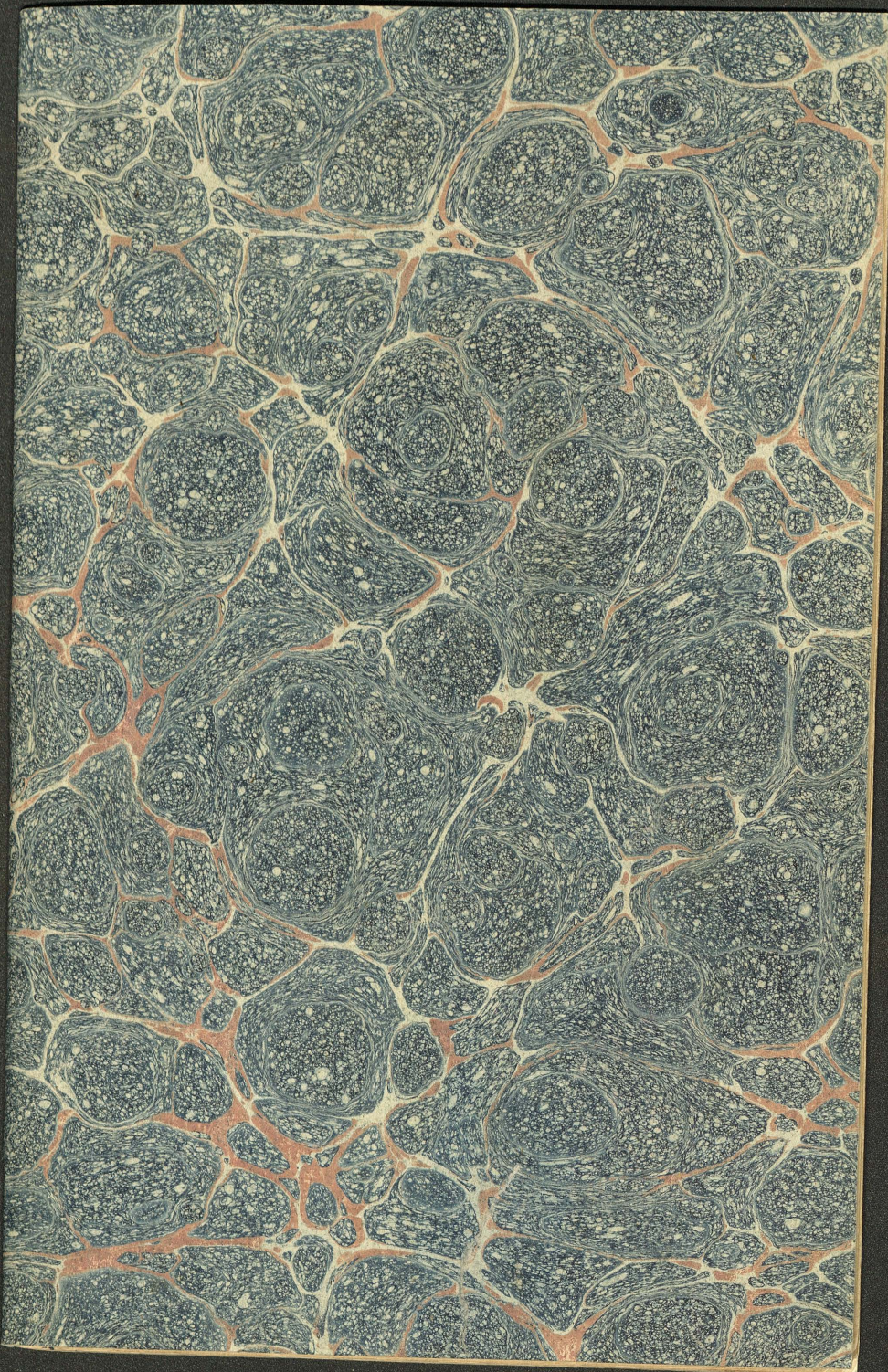




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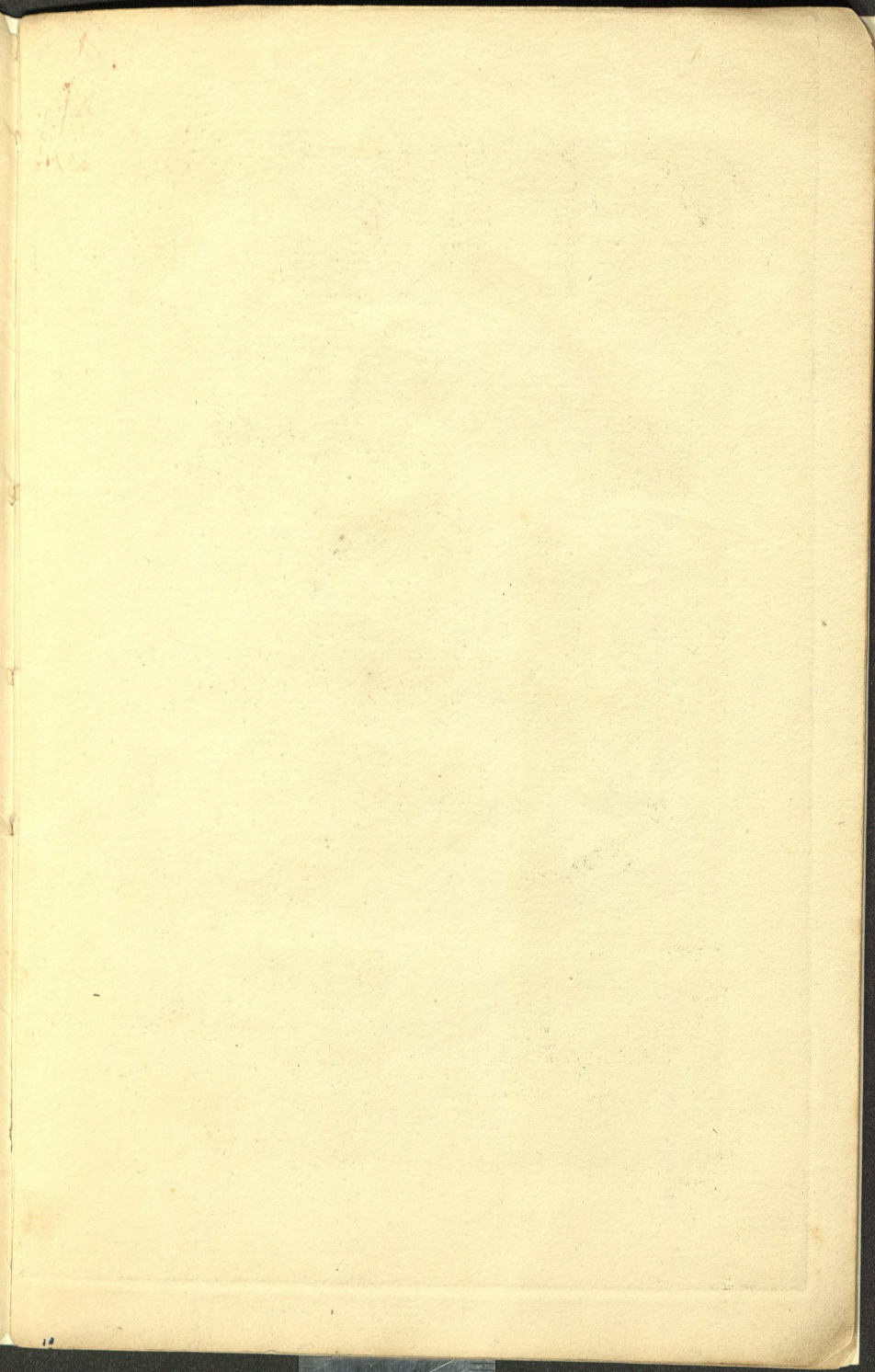
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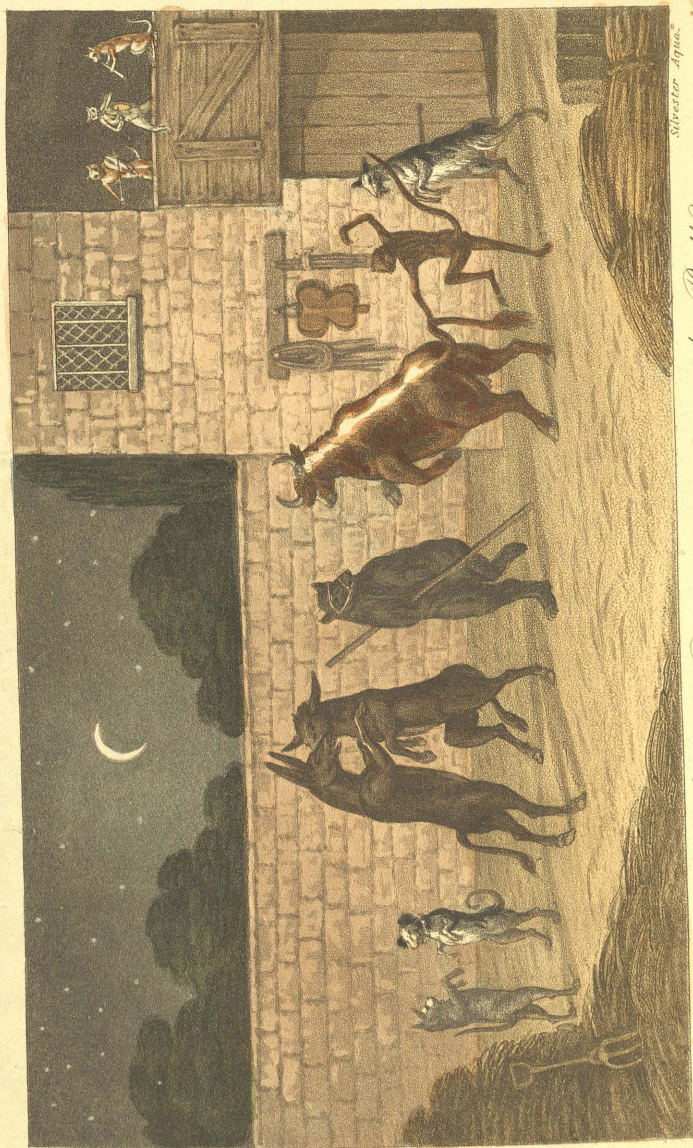
TO

SIR ARGUS'S ROUT.

RECEIVED

SIR ARTHUR'S ROUT.





The Fitten & Pappy now Open the Ball.

NEWS FROM THE STABLE YARD.

PUSS'S PARTY; OR, CATCALLS FOR COMPANY.

N. B. "A few Friends and a Fiddle."

GRIMALKIN, dread lord of the mouse-catching race,
Renown'd for the feats he achiev'd in the chace,
Who, thro' many long winters, alone, had been able
To arrest all freebooters that haunted the stable,
But fatigued with pursuing a wary old mouse,
One eve lay stretch'd out on the roof—with his spouse,
Who, demure and absorb'd in profound contemplation,
Sat, and gaz'd on th' exploits of the feather'd creation;
For the whole of her tribe with obsequious care,
Ever keep *watch and ward* o'er the tenants of air.

It happen'd that night 'twas Sir Argus's rout,
When she saw them so merrily flitting about;
After musing awhile, she exclaim'd to her lord,
" See the blithe little birds, how with common accord,
" They all sport, chirp, and plume them—how pleasing the
sight!

" Let *us* give a ball, 'twill our young ones delight;
" For kittens you *know* are proverbially gay,
" No creatures are ^{fond} ~~lover~~ of frisking than they,
" And *our* little ones step with such exquisite grace
" So light all their motions, so nimble their pace;
" They spring in the air with such bounds and such ease,
" That every beholder they're certain to please.

" Your gracious consent, my dear lord, I implore:" }
 But his lordship, who voted fine parties a bore,
 In notes of discordance tremendously swore.
 Swear he might—but his spouse on her purpose intent,
 And aware of the avenue to his consent,
 With an air of affection advances her paws,
 (Special care having taken to cover the claws)
 And after cajoling in silence awhile,
 Thus renews her discourse with a well-assum'd smile:
 " I am sure, my sweet love, upon solid reflection,
 " To the scheme I propose, you will make no objection;
 " The expence and the trouble 'twill cost us is small,
 " As I dont mean to give a magnificent ball:
 " No need shall I stand in of foreign assistance;
 " Nor indeed shall I ask any friends from a distance:
 " To countries remote I'm not eager to roam;
 " Like the rest of my tribe, I'm attach'd to my home.
 " A select little party I wish to invite,
 " And I'll ask them in person as soon as 'tis light.
 " My guests I'll receive in the yard near the stable,
 " And the horse-block and settle will serve for our table:
 " On the birds which you catch shall my visitors sup,
 " If perchance you kill more than you like to eat up.
 " The music you know we can cheaply provide,
 " As our race have been ever with *catgut* supply'd;
 " Tho' no fiddle, I think, e'er can rival the mew,
 " That I often hear sounding so sweetly from you.
 " On the point too of dresses, no costly attire,
 " To set off their persons, our kittens require;
 " So soft and so sleek is my Selima's hair,
 " Nothing else on her head it becomes her to wear, }
 " No bright painted plumes, like yon flutterers in air. }

" There's no jewel so brilliant in lustre that vies
 " With the emerald that sparkles in Selima's eyes;
 " And the new velvet coat which my son had this spring,
 " When brush'd clean and smooth, is exactly the thing;
 " So you see that their dress will require no addition."
 She then call'd up her young ones to aid her petition.

Her daughter, fair Selima, instantly came,
 Faithful copy in beauty, as well as in name,
 Of her whom Gray's muse has transmitted to fame :
 At her heels closely follows young Tom Cat, her brother;
 Each in turn warmly seconds the prayer of their mother,
 And they scratch their old sire long with artful address,
 Till reluctant he mutters, or grumbles out—*Yes*.

How deeply engaged all next day are the cats!
 What a jubilee season for mice and for rats!
 Lord Grimalkin sets out with the first dawn of light,
A la chasse des oiseaux, the *bonne bouche* for the night;
 Whilst all the long morning, the sister and brother,
 In practising *entrechâts*, vie with each other.
 Their maiden aunt, Tabby, by nature precise,
 Arranges the fête with exactitude nice;
 And Lady Grimalkin, releas'd from that labour,
 Calls to ask all their friends—first the horse, her near neigh-
 bour,
 Addresses, and humbly invites for her guest;
 But he kicks at the offer, and spurns the request.
 Puss finds Madam Brindle more civil by half,
 'Tis seldom she quits her dear darling, the calf;
 Yet agrees to accept the polite invitation,
 And tho' modestly doubting her qualification,
 She protests she will frisk to the best of her power,
 But begs leave to retire at a rational hour.

I report not the others puss went to invite,
As you'll have them announc'd at her party at night.

Soon as Phœbus's car in the main had descended,
To commence the gay ball was the period intended;
And all the Grimalkins, assembled in state,
The approach of their visitors anxiously wait,
When at length their arrival is heard at the gate.

My lady, to greet them steps forward with grace,
Whilst the broad curling grin which expands o'er her face,
Most distinctly denotes her of Cheshire extraction,
And lends a new charm to each courteous action;
As her guests, in their turn, puss advances to hail,
Licks her whiskers and flirts complaisantly her tail.

To her utter surprise, amongst others, there came
A Russian of rank—the Count Bruin by name—
From the prison escap'd—where he'd long been confin'd
With Sir Pug, his companion, who follow'd behind.
Amateur of the art was the *Russ*—and by chance
Hearing Lady Grimalkin was giving a dance,
Begg'd humbly permission to join the gay party—
Her ladyship greets him with welcome most hearty,
Purrs out a fine speech, for delighted is she
To receive as her guest such a noble grandee.
A conceited young puppy, whose heart had been smitten,
As some people suppos'd, by the sprightly Miss Kitten,
Strutted up in a bustle to ask her to dance.
Poor Pussey shrunk back as she saw him advance,
And to shew her dislike, gave an elegant shrug;
'Twas thought she had rather been ask'd by Sir Pug.

The Kitten and Puppy now open the ball,
And the **King of the Catti's* the dance that they call;

Miss Pussey, *en poussette*, twirls nimbly about,
 But her next neighbour, Donkey, is terribly out;
 Whilst all the set sneer to see him such a ninny,
 For his partner selecting his own sister Jenny!
 Too slow for the time, they go hobbling along,
 And turn which way they will, they are sure to turn wrong.
 Madam Cow kicks her heels with a frisk and a bound,
 And heavy's the blow where they batter the ground;
 So unweildy her movements, so clumsy, so droll,
 All the world cried she danc'd *comme une vache Espagnole*.
 Her conductor, the stranger of noble degree,
 Foots it almost as awkward and lumpish as she;
 But his feet might be cold, being wont heretofore
 To practise his steps on a hot iron floor,
 And perform to a flagelet—not to a fiddle,—
 Hence he lagg'd in the rear when he led down the middle;
 For he could not contrive, had he gone any faster,
 To include all the steps he had learnt of his master.
 Sir Pug follows next with impertinent air,
 And mimicks in turn all the company there;
 With grins and grimaces, and harlequin leaps,
 Now he's here—now he's there—now he vaults—now he
 creeps.

The skipping Miss Nanny Goat, late from the West,
 For a partner selects, but to turn to a jest:
 Her grandfather's beard too he rudely assails,
 And asks if they never use razors in Wales?
 Then turns, with a vain resolution to ape
 Major Stag's proud deportment and elegant shape,
 Whose partner, Miss Reynard, glides swimmingly down,
 Most affectedly trailing the train of her gown;

* The King of the Catti—name of a favourite new dance.

Now indeed are her red locks fast changing to grey,
 But she boasts of the followers she had in her day.
 Her nieces, Miss Squirrels, two lovely young creatures,
 Some faint likeness bore to their aunt in their features;
 And she, dreading to serve as a foil by their side,
 Had left both at home, thro' pure envy and pride.
 But the Lady Grimalkin, attentive to all,
 Enquires why Miss Squirrels come not to her ball?
 Who in frisking and jumping take so much delight,
 And had promis'd to dance with her Tommy that night.
 Miss Reynard replies:—For a dance of this kind,
 Ma'am, I thought them too little, so left them behind.
 At home, it is true, they oft frisk in high glee,
 But they would not be *here*—at the top of the tree.
 This she said with a cross-corner look and a leer,
 Which *meant* shrewd observation, but *turn'd out* a sneer;
 With remarks cut and dry, and a *stale off-hand* hit,
 Thus supporting pretensions for keen ready wit.

In his ermine-white doublet the Rabbit repairs
 To a bashful descendant of Cowper's *pet* hares;
 And, alone, tho' so wanton and sportive her pranks,
 The Lev'ret must *here* be *compelled* to the ranks.
 Their motions were elegant, nimble, and light,
 But the *cousins* were both in a terrible fright.

Aunt Tabby sits watching Miss Puss in a corner,
 And eagerly seeks an occasion to warn her
 Of the evils attending the conjugal state,
 Which she begs her to ponder before 'tis too late;
 Observes 'tis a scene of perpetual strife,
 And grown to a proverb, that husband and wife,
 Ill assorted, of cat and dog must lead the life.

Many wholesome instructions she added beside,
 Which Miss might have heard, but she never applied.
 " From the rules I lay down, niece, take care not to swerve,
 " Mind you treat that Count Bruin with prudent reserve;
 " A *stranger he's still*, tho' a stranger of note,
 " And his manners, perhaps, may be rough as his coat;
 " If you're not on your guard, he may give you a hug—
 " And dont be too free with that impudent pug!"

To all this discourse her niece seems to attend,
 Tho' she secretly wishes the lecture to end—
 Gives her paw to Sir Pug for the following dances,
 Nor seeks to discourage his forward advances.
 The pert little Puppy makes up to Miss Lamb,
 Who came with her father, the noble Lord Ram;
 Her figure is pleasing—clad simply in white—
 But her manner seems rather too *sheepish* to-night;
 Trim requests her fair hand—but she scarcely makes answer,
 And forbears to stand up, tho' a nice little dancer.
 Her confusion he sees, and continues to *worry*
 The innocent thing, till she's quite in a flurry:
 When her father, far-famed as a warrior so bold
 In the days of his youth, and tho' now growing old,
 On his prowess and skill still reposing reliance,
 With an air of disdain stamps his foot in defiance.
 Trim, afraid of attacking or making resistance,
 Cur and coward as he is, sneaks away to a distance.

All dainties at supper the table was rich in,
 Which Tabby that morning had filch'd from the kitchen:
 Fish, flesh, fowl, and fruits are displayed at the feast,
 The palate to suit of each different beast:
 Greedy old mother Sow swallows, fast as she's able,
 All that comes *within* reach, *without* choice, at the table;

Her long lappet-like lugs in the gravy she dips,
 And with fringes of grease—she embroiders their tips.
 The Rabbit on lettuces makes his part good,
 While my Lady admires at such anchorite food;
 Miss Reynard supposes a cold in his head,
 For she noticed “his eyes look remarkably red.”
 She herself, to be sure, needed no such excuse,
 As she managed to swallow three parts of a goose.
 Pug fails not to mingle his meal with his chatter,
 Nor omits, while he prates, still to empty his platter,
 Makes free with the chesnuts, bespread o’er the table,
 With his own, not the cat’s paw, like Pug in the fable;
 Tho’ our Pug, like his elders, was easy and free,
 And no monkey had e’er seen the world more than he.

When the guests had regal’d, long as palate could wish,
 When the Sow had so glutton’d on every dish,
 That she found to her grief, she could cram down no more,
 And sought to take refuge from mirth in a snore,
 Then as silence pervades the assembly awhile,
 The Jack-Ass, who fancies he sings in grand style,
 Thinks his ear must be good—since he knows it is long,
 And his voice may be fine, for its loud and its strong,
 So proposes to favor his friends with a song:
 He boasted that Braham was one of his kin.

(Miss Reynard looks arch, and Sir Pug gives a grin—
 The ill-manner’d Bruin bursts out in a roar,
 And e’en the cats laugh, which they ne’er did before.)

Lord Grimalkin next orders Miss Puss and her brother
 To join in a glee with himself and their mother:
 They ope their mouths widely, and loudly they squall,
 But in vain for applause every effort must call;

For a concert of cats all its hearers embroils,
 Tho' its harmony pleases when painted in oils,
 This piques the Grimalkins—they fret with vexation,
 To find they're *surpass'd* by the feather'd creation;
 And strait the harsh concert is brought to a close.
 To wipe off this disgrace, the two kittens propose
 To trip it once more on their frolicsome toes;
 And they all might have caper'd till peep of the day,
 Had the weather continued as cheerful as they.
 But misfortune rides on in the howl of the blast,
 Which tells them a tempest is gathering fast;
 And soon all the stars that bespangled the sky,
 And rival'd the beams shot from Selima's eye,
 Whose twinkling supplied the gay dancers with light,
 By the envious clouds are obscur'd from the sight.
 The Grimalkins, alarm'd when they see the sky lower,
 As they dread to bedew their soft fur in a shower,
 In haste break up the ball—to all parties' regret,
 And retire to the barn to secure them from wet.

Now the cats, like the stars, are conceal'd from each eye,
 And none but my Muse can their actions descry;
 Not ev'n *she* shall reveal what is hidden from view,
 Or whether they straitway the vermin pursue,
 Which buildings of that kind are known to frequent,
 Or desist from their prey for a season—content
 With their recent good cheer, and still blithsome and gay,
 To the toils of the chace prefer pleasure and play—
 (For Puss in the corner being just the right number)
 Or whether their eyelids they close in soft slumber—
 To make known to my readers I frankly refuse,
 No *cat is let out of the bag* by my Muse;

For tho' types of all treachery we count the whole tribe,
Worse than *turn cat in pan* 'twere—to blab without bribe.

Purr-oration.

Then live, ye Tom Cats,
Thro' all your nine lives;
Pursue mice and rats,
Or swear at your wives;
Feast as oft as you please
On the daintiest fish;
Squall catches and glees
When and where you may wish,
So long as you're out of my hearing and sight,
Nor molest me by day, nor alarm me by night.

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